

COMMENDATION FOR EFFORTS TO RESCUE AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

DECEMBER 4, 1970.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MR. RIVERS, from the Committee on Armed Services,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. Res. 1282]

together with

A DISSENTING VIEW

The Committee on Armed Services to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 1282) support for efforts to rescue American prisoners of war incarcerated in North Vietnam, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the resolution as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 2 after line 8 add the following:

Resolved further, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives, as a further expression of its concern for prisoners of war, that the American negotiators at the Peace Conference in Paris should be instructed to insist that the matter of prisoners be given first priority on the Peace Talks agenda; and

That negotiators should seek improved treatment of prisoners, release of names of prisoners, inspection of prison conditions by the International Red Cross or other international bodies, and the assurance of continuing discussions looking toward the eventual exchange or release of prisoners; and

That no other negotiations should proceed until there is substantive progress on the prisoner of war issue.

EXPLANATION OF THE AMENDMENT

The resolution, as introduced, expresses the commendation of the House to the official command, officers and men involved in the military expedition of November 21, 1970, which sought to free the U.S. prisoners of war believed to be held by the enemy near Hanoi, North Vietnam.

The amendment enlarges the resolve portion of the resolution to express the sense of the House of Representatives that American negotiations at the Peace Conference in Paris should be instructed to insist that the prisoners of war issue be given first priority on the Talks agenda and that no other negotiations should proceed until there is substantive progress on at least some phase of the prisoner of war problem. The amendment specifies that negotiators should seek improved treatment of prisoners, release of prisoners' names and inspection of prisons by the International Red Cross or some other independent international body, and should seek assurance of continuing discussions looking to the eventual exchange or release of the prisoners.

PURPOSE OF THE RESOLUTION

An indeterminate number of American military personnel are in captivity in North Vietnam, some having been prisoners for as long as 6 years, and are forced to exist in circumstances which offend elemental standards of human decency. The Government of North Vietnam in its treatment of prisoners continually violates the Geneva Convention of 1949 on prisoners of war to which it is a signatory. The Government of North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front have consistently refused to identify prisoners they hold, to allow inspection of prisons, to permit regular exchange of mail between all prisoners and their families, and to release sick and injured prisoners as required by the Geneva Convention.

Our Government has made numerous and repeated efforts to obtain better care for, and release of, POW's. Our negotiators in Paris have repeatedly raised the POW issue. Our Government has tried by a variety of other diplomatic means to gain help for the POW's. There have also been numerous efforts to arouse support both at home and abroad and to publicly proclaim the Government's deep concern for the welfare of POW's. Many private citizens and nongovernmental groups have worked tirelessly to bring the spotlight of world attention upon the tragic plight of prisoners of war. Included have been the determined call for action by the courageous wives and families of prisoners and support by veterans' groups, churches, student groups, labor unions, professional organizations, business firms, large and small, and the news media as well as numerous individual citizens. There have been petitions, letter-writing campaigns and trips abroad by prisoners' families, Congressmen, and others.

The House in 1969 passed a resolution strongly protesting the treatment of servicemen held by the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front and calling for compliance with the requirements of the Geneva Convention.

Notwithstanding all of these efforts, conditions have not materially improved for the prisoners. The North Vietnamese continue to refuse to provide a full accounting of the number of our men held, have re-

fused to release sick or wounded prisoners as called for by the Geneva Convention of 1949, have not permitted inspection of camps and have refused to enter discussions on prisoner release. Coupled with this absence of any substantive response are indications that some prisoners may be reaching the limit of their ability to survive. In fact, recent reports from unofficial sources indicate some prisoners may have died.

For all of these reasons a decision was reached in the executive branch to launch a rescue effort at Son Tay, some 20 nautical miles from Hanoi, where it was believed some prisoners were held. The rescue operation was carried out on November 21, 1970, and the rescue forces successfully entered the Son Tay compound. But, as is now well known, the prisoners had apparently been moved some time before and none were brought out. All of the men involved in the rescue operation returned from North Vietnam with no men lost and two suffering minor injuries.

The purpose of the resolution is to commend the official command and officers and men involved in the rescue operation for the courage they displayed in this hazardous undertaking. It is an undertaking which the 75 sponsors of House Resolution 1282 and identical resolutions and the committee believe will let POW's know the the Government and their fellow fighting men are willing to go to great risk to secure their release and will let the families of these prisoners know that we will not let the POW's be forgotten.

The resolution, as amended, strengthens the voice of the House in support of POW's by expressing, in addition to the commendation for the extraordinary courage of those who took part in the operation of November 21, the sense of the House that the prisoner of war issue should be given top priority at the Paris peace talks and the negotiations should not proceed on any other point at Paris until there is at least the beginning of solving the problems of the POW's. If some progress were made on just one of the many aspects of prisoner of war treatment, it would be the signal that negotiations could proceed in other areas.

The committee believes that the House, as a body, should have an opportunity to express itself in this manner on the importance of the plight of the prisoners of war. The committee believes that the resolution, as amended, will express to Hanoi and to the rest of the world how very deeply the national legislature of the United States feels about our men who are prisoners.

THE IMPACT ON NEGOTIATIONS

The committee is not unmindful that it may be charged that the resolution, if followed, will prevent any chance of other negotiations proceeding in Paris and could conceivably delay the possibility of getting a negotiated settlement to the war. The committee does not believe that such a charge would be valid. The Paris meetings have now passed their 93d plenary session and there has been no progress to date. Only recently our chief negotiator, the Honorable David K. E. Bruce, said that "There have never been any true negotiations." But the committee believes that in the framework of the negotiation there is even a more important reason for making the POW issue the priority item. For a negotiated agreement of any kind on any phase of the war to be effected and to be successful, there has to be at least a minimum

of trust exchanged between the negotiating parties. How could the North Vietnamese expect the world to trust its word in any agreement when it is not capable of showing the most elemental humane consideration for individuals? If, for example, the North Vietnamese agreed to a ceasefire, how could our people have any confidence that the North Vietnamese would live up to the agreement for any length of time except when it might suit their temporary purpose?

If there could be agreement on just one beginning step, such as inspection of prisons by representatives of the International Red Cross or release of names of all prisoners held, it would be an enormous signal of hope, not only for prisoners of war and their families but for the entire course of negotiations on the war.

It should be clearly understood that the resolution expresses the sense of the House as a vehicle for conveying the House's deep concern on this issue. It is not binding on the President. It does not limit the President's constitutional initiative in the conduct of foreign affairs. If, for reasons which are not now apparent to the House, the opportunity presented itself for a breakthrough in negotiations independent of the prisoner issue, the determination as to whether to use the opportunity would continue to remain with the President. The resolution expresses the sense of the House that progress on the prisoner of war issue is the one item that could best serve as the foundation stone for a true breakthrough in negotiations and that negotiations should be approached on that basis.

COMMITTEE POSITION

The Committee on Armed Services, a quorum being present, approved the enactment of this resolution as amended by a vote of 27 to 2.

DEPARTMENTAL POSITION

The witness appearing before the committee for the Department of Defense, the Honorable Armistead I. Selden, Jr., Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, testified in support of the resolution *as introduced*.

DISSENTING VIEW OF HON. ROBERT L. LEGGETT,
DEMOCRAT, OF CALIFORNIA

Certainly it is regrettable that this legislative body must formally divide or splinter on the issue of the wisdom of the military effort that took place over the weekend of November 22, last. The heroism of the rescue team at Son Tay is here not at issue—the issue is the wisdom of those who planned the operation.

I am not pressing the issue to condemn the action that took place since I believe the emotion and heartache of the families of our prisoners of war should not needlessly be tampered with. On the other hand, I think it is also needlessly cruel to give false encouragement.

There is a course of action that has not been fully explored that will possibly both bring peace and produce the return of our prisoners alive and that course is *serious negotiations in Paris*.

We have offered to date to return 36,000 United States-Vietnam prisoners if the Vietcong and North Vietnamese will return 8,000 South Vietnamese and U.S. prisoners. This offer has been rejected apparently on the theory that Hanoi does not hold its prisoners dear.

Hanoi has indicated that it is paranoid about one thing—*total U.S. withdrawal*. The United States by the amendment of Chairman Rivers to the pending resolution states that the United States will only negotiate on one issue—*prisoners of war*.

It would seem reasonable, therefore, that at this time we should formally offer to continue our measured withdrawal from Southeast Asia at the same monthly percentage rate that our prisoners are returned safe to American hands.

RAID SUCCESS IN DOUBT

The action of the valiant military corps that stormed the Son Tay compound has not met with unanimous U.S. support. The majority of my own mail is strongly opposed. Nobody faults the valor of the men, but the wisdom of the action is indicated. In my view the criticism is well founded.

(1) The *intelligence was faulty* as was admitted by Vice President Agnew, but denied by Secretary Laird. We don't know today whether our prisoners had been removed from the camp 2 days or 2 or 3 months before November 22.

Only the most twisted logic can construe the operation as a success. The objective was to rescue prisoners of war; the objective was not attained. As an anonymous "Washington official" told newsweek magazine, "We are merchandising what essentially remains one big flop."

(2) *Justification for the mission is inadequate.*

Three secondary justifications for the mission have been suggested: First, it has been said the raid has raised the morale of the prisoners of war. I ask, how are they ever to know about it? The only information they receive is that which their captors choose to give them.

Second, it had been said the raid raised the morale of the prisoners families.

This is not necessarily true. The mother of the Navy lieutenant who has been a prisoner of war longer than any other American told the press she was afraid the raid might affect the flow of mail and possibly lead to reprisals. She said, "I think some other type of negotiations would be better . . . You can call me a big dove. I am behind McGovern, Church, and all of them."

A POW wife described the raid to the *Washington Post* as a "political move" by the Nixon administration, empty of any solid, lasting commitment to secure the release of American men in captivity. Explaining further, she said, "I think it's very unusual that they finally decided to make the raid at the same time they were violating North Vietnamese territory with those massive air raids. I think Senator Fulbright was right in saying it was a provocative act. And it wiped the bombing raids right out of the headlines. I think they were exploiting the anguish of the men and their families, using the (prison camp) raid to try to justify a military act."

I do not say these views represent the majority opinion among the POW families; most likely they do not. Many of these women have been living in states of uncertainty for years, and have adjusted to the possibility that their husbands may be dead. It is understandable that they should desire a resolution of the situation one way or the other. But policy should not be determined on these grounds. It is the obligation of the U.S. Government to do everything in its power to obtain a favorable resolution.

Third, it is claimed that the raid "shows the world we care." I cannot see how such a carelessly planned operation can serve this purpose. If we really cared, we would begin seriously to negotiate total withdrawal for total repatriation.

(3) *The penance of failure was not fully thought out.* Since I was allowed no cross-examination of the one defense witness that appeared before our committee in support of this resolution, I must necessarily rely on what I read in the papers.

On November 26, last, the following article appeared (*The Washington Post*, Nov. 26, 1970):

HANOI WARNS UNITED STATES ON COMMANDO RAID

SAIGON, November 25.—North Vietnam said today Americans "will be punished" for the U.S. commando raid last weekend on a prisoner of war camp south of Hanoi.

The warning, which gave no indication as to the nature of the threatened reprisals, was published in the Hanoi daily *Nhan Dan* and carried by Radio Hanoi in a broadcast monitored here.

"The Americans are warned that they will be punished accordingly," *Nhan Dan* said. "All consequences are the responsibilities of the American aggressors."

The newspaper article and the broadcast were the first known public acknowledgments of the raid, which occurred last Saturday. The helicopter-borne commando attempt to rescue American prisoners of war was unsuccessful because the camp was deserted.

Since that warning the papers report the following actions that may well be the punishment Hanoi alludes to:

A. The *Washington Star* of December 2, 1970, states:

BIGGEST ATTACK IN MONTHS HITS THREE VIET CITIES

SAIGON.—Communist gunners unleashed a series of shelling attacks up and down South Vietnam last night firing rockets and mortars into three air bases, three provincial capitals and two district towns.

It was one of the biggest nights for the enemy gunners in two months. Allied military spokesmen said over-all casualties and damage were light. *But an unspecified number of Americans was killed at the big Cam Ranh Bay air base 193 miles northeast of Saigon, and more Americans were wounded at the Phu Cat air base 100 miles up the coast from Cam Ranh Bay.*

HOLLOWAY FIELD HIT

Enemy rockets also hit Holloway air field in the central highlands, where both U.S. and South Vietnamese personnel are stationed; the provincial capitals of Pleiku City and Ban Me Thuot in the central highlands and Quang Ngai on the central coast, and two district towns in the Mekong Delta.

A South Vietnamese spokesman said there were no casualties or damage at Holloway field, but two Vietnamese civilians were killed and 16 were wounded in the attacks on the cities and towns.

Nearly 100 enemy rocket and mortar attacks have been reported in the past four days, the heaviest such assaults since early October. A U.S. spokesman said the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong apparently were taking advantage of the current moonless nights.

A U.S. spokesman reported that a U.S. Air Force F4 Phantom jet fighter-bomber crashed today in the lower Laotian panhandle; presumably it was bombing the Ho Chi Minh supply trail. The spokesman said both crewmen were rescued in good condition but the cause of the crash was not known. *It was the 75th American plane reported lost over Laos since March 10.*

The U.S. Command also announced the crash of an Army helicopter 29 miles northeast of Pleiku with four Americans killed. It was the 4,130th helicopter reported lost in the war. The cause of that crash also was not known.

INFANTRY PUSH BEGINS

South Vietnamese infantrymen advanced through mangrove swamps and bamboo thickets on the edge of the U Minh forest today in a new sweep into the Viet Cong's long-time lair in Vietnam's deep south.

In an initial clash yesterday, troops of the 21st South Vietnamese Division claimed 28 Viet Cong killed with help from helicopter gunships. One government infantry man was reported wounded.

U.S. B52 bombers pounded the dense woods with two raids about 15 miles from the ground operation. The strikes were the first by the big bombers in the delta area in nearly two months.

In Phnom Penh, the Cambodian government said its troops had stemmed the three-week-old offensive by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong north of the capital and had begun counter drives.

B. The *New York Times* of December 3, reports:

INCREASED ENEMY BARRAGES ARE REPORTED

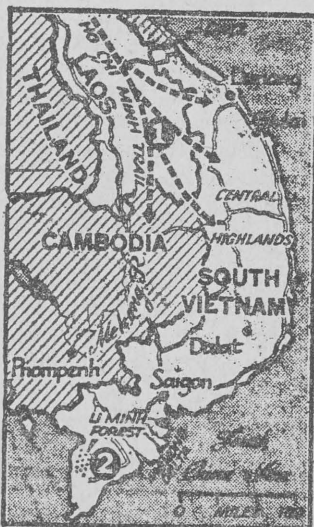
SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM, December 2.—Taking advantage of moonless nights, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong have stepped up rocket barrages against towns and military bases almost the entire length of South Vietnam.

In the 24 hours ended at daybreak today 22 allied military installations or populated areas were reported shelled. The targets included three air bases, three provincial capitals and two district towns.

Most of the shellings were between midnight and dawn. They ranged from the Mekong Delta in the south to the central Highlands and the northern section of the country.

DISPENSARY WAS SHELLED

In the last four days, nearly 100 mortar and rocket attacks have been reported, the highest sustained shellings since October.



The New York Times Dec. 3, 1970

A U.S. plane went down in southern Laos (1). South Vietnamese troops pressed drive in U Minh Forest (2).

Allied military spokesman said the latest shellings had caused light casualties and damage over-all, although in isolated instances the toll had been heavy.

One such shelling was the rocket attack Monday on a *United States medical dispensary at Chulai in the northern part of the country that killed or wounded the entire dispensary staff.*

While the shellings increased, ground fighting in South Vietnam remained at a relatively low level.

In neighboring Laos, a United States Air Force F-4 Phantom fighter-bomber crashed. The United States command said, from unknown causes the two fliers aboard were rescued in good condition, they said.

In the extreme south end of South Vietnam, infantrymen of the South Vietnamese 21st Division pushed ahead with a new operation to clear the U Minh Forest area, long a major Vietcong hideout, a spokesman said.

No word of fresh fighting has been reported since an initial clash Tuesday on the edge of the dense forest. The South Vietnamese said they had killed 28 Vietcong while sustaining one man wounded.

(C) A Washington news radio station reported on December 3:

There was a report on the morning news that intelligence sources in Saigon believed there was a connection between the recent loss of two C-123 transport planes in South Vietnam and efforts being made by the Communists to retaliate for the recent air raids over North Vietnam.

Thirty-eight Americans and 75 South Vietnamese were killed in the crashes. Wreckage of the second plane has not as yet been found.

It was indicated in the report that the intelligence sources believed that both planes exploded in the air and were caused by hostile action.

The story was amplified in the December 4 *Washington Post* as follows:

HOPE FADES AS SEARCH GOES ON FOR U.S. PLANES

SAIGON, December 3.—Hope faded today of finding any survivors of two U.S. transport planes which disappeared in the central part of South Vietnam with 123 Americans and Vietnamese aboard.

The transports—one missing since last Friday, the other since Sunday—were presumed to have crashed in rugged mountain country. U.S. headquarters in Saigon withheld information on security grounds on where the planes took off or where they were going, although it was known that they took off from separate bases.

The plane missing since Friday carried 79 persons—an American crew of 5, one U.S. military passenger, 58 Vietnamese soldiers and their 15 dependents.

The other transport, missing since Sunday, carried 44 persons—a 5-man American crew, 27 American troops and 12 Vietnamese passengers.

Except for a large scale operation in the Mekong Delta, fighting across South Vietnam remained at a low level and even the enemy rocket attacks of earlier this week tapered off.

A delayed field report said that 18 South Vietnamese militiamen were killed and 15 wounded in a North Vietnamese-Vietcong ground attack on a district military headquarters early Wednesday on the central coast 240 miles northeast of Saigon. Six enemy were also reported killed.

In Cambodia, the government reported two attacks inside the outer defense ring of Phnom Penh but a spokesman could give no casualty figures or damage information.

American jets struck enemy replacements along Highway 4 southwest of the Phnom Penh in the morning and again in the afternoon to help relieve pressure on Cambodian troops involved in an effort to clear the road.

(D) *Time* magazine under date of December 7, page 17, reports:

WHAT IF THE P.O.W.S HAD BEEN THERE?

One former P.O.W., Specialist Four Coy Tinsley, said that he felt that if there had been prisoners at Son Tay, the guards "would probably have annihilated them and moved out." The Ivory Coast planners obviously felt that surprise would stun the enemy.

Even today our committee has been inadequately briefed on this undertaking. On November 23, 1970, Secretary Laird sent an unsolicited report to my office that reads in part as follows:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, D.C.

The attached is provided for your information and possible use.

RICHARD G. CAPEN, JR.,
Assistant to the Secretary for Legislative Affairs.

No. 948-70.

NOVEMBER 23, 1970.

Memorandum for Correspondents.

The following statement was made by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) Jerry W. Friedheim:

Gentlemen, security considerations now permit me to report to you details of the *limited-duration, protective reaction air strikes conducted against military targets in North Vietnam—south of the 19th Parallel.* . . .

I am particularly pleased to report that we suffered no—I repeat no—losses of any of these aircraft or their crews. . . .

These protective reaction missions are designed to protect the lives of United States pilots flying (a) unarmed reconnaissance missions over North Vietnam, and (b) pilots flying missions associated with interdiction of North Vietnamese

military supplies throughout southern Laos moving toward South Vietnam. . . .

On another point, I have noted erroneous reports from Hanoi that in connection with our protective reaction strikes we have bombed prisoner of war camps. Such reports are false. We will continue to hold the other side fully accountable for the safety and well being of our prisoners of war. The other side should make no mistake about that.

The press has apparently had some conflicting and contradictory later reports—but none have been sent to my office. *This action by the Pentagon poses a credibility problem of major magnitude.*

HOPE FOR PRISONERS

The resolution states that the action was initiated to give hope to our prisoners so that now the prisoners must feel better. The question I ask is how are the prisoners ever to know what we tried to do before they are released?

PRESS QUESTION WISDOM OF ACTION

The press that I have reviewed is by no means unanimous in their support of the Son Tay effort.

In his *New York Times* column of November 29, 1970, Tom Wicker pointed out how continuation of the present policy will condemn our POW's to indefinite imprisonment.

WHITHER VIETNAMIZATION?

WASHINGTON.—After months of seeming quiescence in Vietnam, the news last week of new bombing raids and a derring-do attempt to rescue prisoners of war in the North raised once again a question that is too often forgotten. Where is Vietnamization taking us?

The Sontay rescue mission is easy enough to criticize, since it failed to bring home any prisoners; but it is not as easy to say that it shouldn't have been attempted, since the actual strike was carried off without a hitch and since the Administration apparently had what it thought was solid reason to believe in the possibility of success. And it remains to be seen whether the raid will have unfortunate aftereffects.

It could, for instance, result in making life harder than it already is for American prisoners, if the North Vietnamese react by taking more stringent security measures or if they seek to punish the prisoners for the rescue effort. That effort could also make it harder for anyone to negotiate some or all of the prisoners' release, since the North Vietnamese might well fear that an agreement anytime soon would look to the world as if they had been intimidated by the aerial incursion into their territory. And if the raid dramatized to Hanoi the deep concern of the Administration and of Americans generally on the prisoner issue, it might make the North Vietnamese Government more determined than ever not to yield the prisoners without some significant political return.

But it was the bombing strikes against the North that raised the deeper question of Vietnamization. Despite Pentagon circumlocution, she extent and power of the air raids suggested a good deal more than "protective reaction" against the shooting down of an American reconnaissance plane—that, or a bad case of overkill.

These bombings almost certainly were directed in large part at North Vietnamese military preparations, transport, troop concentrations, and other targets that, if left along, might have been or become a threat to the dwindling American forces in South Vietnam. It was also to "protect American troops" and to further the Vietnamization withdrawals that the Cambodian invasion was launched last spring, and at the same time a series of air strikes against the North.

Considerable American air activity continues in Cambodia, although American ground troops are no longer fighting there. These Cambodian air strikes, too, are justified on grounds of protecting American lives in South Vietnam, although many of them seem, instead, to be in direct support of the Cambodian army.

These events beg the question whether, as Vietnamization proceeds and American forces in South Vietnam become less and less powerful, there will not be a growing necessity for air strikes at the North, in Cambodia and in Laos. As any President would, Mr. Nixon will surely take very step he thinks necessary to protect the remaining troops.

If that proves to be the case, then the further question arises whether the prospect of a negotiated settlement could possibly be improved in such circumstances. If progressive American withdrawals force Mr. Nixon to strike more frequently at the North in order to protect an ever-smaller American force in the South, the attacks would hardly improve Hanoi's willingness to bargain.

Moreover, Hanoi's rock-bottom demands for a settlement appear to include a different government in Saigon and a fixed date for the completion of the American withdrawal—neither of which is offered by Vietnamization. For all these reasons, Vietnamization has to be viewed, not as a program leading to a negotiated political settlement of the war, but as an alternative to such a settlement.

That might be all right—indeed, it might be the best way out of a bad trip—if Vietnamization appeared to be a successful alternative. But Vietnamization does not, in fact, promise to end the war.

It raises, rather, the remote possibility of the kind of destructive assault on a small remaining American force that might reverse the American momentum out of the war. More distinctly, it raises the real possibility that after most American troops are safely withdrawn, the North Vietnamese can review the fighting at a level Saigon alone could not long withstand.

But if Mr. Nixon refuses to negotiate a change in the Saigon Government, could he permit it to be destroyed by force after a unilateral American withdrawal? Hardly.

The fact is that Vietnamization implied a moral obligation for continued American assistance to South Vietnam—not in peace but in war, not with aid but with air power, not for an occasional weekend of protective reaction but for an open-ended future. How much of a continuing American establishment in South Vietnam—civil and military—Vietnamization may also imply no one ever has been willing to state unequivocally.

And in such a future of continuing war, what can ever be done about the American prisoners in North Vietnam?

A column entitled “‘Net Plus’ of POW Raid Yet To Be Discerned,” by Crosby S. Noyes, published in the *Washington Star* December 3, 1970. It should be emphasized that Mr. Noyes’ columns usually are strongly hawkish.

“NET PLUS” OF POW RAID YET TO BE DISCERNED

As a public relations exercise—and this essentially is what it was—the recent commando raid on a North Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp hardly adds up to the “net plus” that the administration claims for it.

Everything that has emerged since the raid confirms the impression that its purpose was primarily psychological. But the psychological results were not deeply explored ahead of time. And the piecemeal fashion in which the administration has disclosed details of the operation has increased doubts about the motivation of the planners.

In any event, it is hard to swallow the assertion that the fate of the 378 American flyers believed to be held in North Vietnam was the chief consideration. Only a few of them, at best, could have been expected to be rescued in the raid on Son Tay. For the rest, the psychological benefits would have been doubtful, to say the least.

What is evident is that the administration some time ago lost faith in the idea that the prisoners could be freed through diplomatic negotiation. And it also was concluded that, as a matter of policy, it wouldn’t do to “stand idly by” and make no show of trying to rescue the men.

The gesture, rather than the result, apparently was of top importance. Last summer, a camp was selected for the rescue attempt. According to many witnesses, the determining factor in the selection was the accessibility of this particular site to a helicopter assault. Above all, the planners were confident of their ability to get into the compound at Son Tay and get out again without disastrous casualties.

This apparently was considered more important than the rescue of any prisoners. From the evidence, some of the top planners of the expedition had doubts that the camp was occupied at the time of the raid, and apparently no very serious effort was made to find out whether it was or not.

In other words, the decision was made that, with or without prisoners, the operation would be a “net plus.” And it goes without saying that, in assaulting an abandoned com-

pound, the risk to the rescue party was substantially reduced.

To say this is not to detract in any way from the bravery of the men who took part in the raid or the splendid precision with which it was planned and executed. To volunteer for any night-time operation deep in enemy territory takes courage and dedication of very high quality. The question here is what results could realistically have been expected from an inevitably hazardous venture.

What, in fact, have they turned out to be?

Perhaps for the families of the captured men there was momentary hope. But this surely was balanced by the risks involved and the thought that this kind of rescue operation could not easily be repeated.

Perhaps it served to convince the prisoners that they have not been abandoned and that their government "still cares" about their fate. But this undoubtedly genuine concern has not increased their chance of freedom and may, on the contrary, have compromised it.

Perhaps it was upsetting to the North Vietnamese to discover the vulnerability of their defenses and to learn just how far we would go to free our men. But the discovery is not likely to make the authorities in Hanoi more tractable in negotiations for release of the prisoners. And it is certain to provoke the most strenuous efforts to prevent a repetition of the Son Tay episode.

In short, if there is a plus to the exercise, it is yet to come.

It might, as suggested earlier in this space, take the form of a sober realization that the great majority of the American prisoners cannot be rescued by spectacular and "unusual" methods. And, given the unlikelihood of any negotiated settlement of the war, the diplomatic efforts being made in Paris and elsewhere hold very little promise of success.

The best way—perhaps the only way of freeing the prisoners, it would seem, is to stop any further disengagement of American forces from Vietnam until an agreement on the men is reached with the North Vietnamese. They could not be expected to release them all at the same time, but gradually and in proportion to the rate of withdrawal.

The North Vietnamese themselves have suggested that such a deal could be made. And if they are as concerned over the fate of the prisoners as they say they are, the leaders of the administration would do well to explore this possibility.

Newsweek, December 7, reads in part as follows:

The conspicuous heroism of the raiders themselves, in fact, served the Administration well. At the White House, President Nixon pinned decorations on Manor, Simons and two enlisted men, Green Beret Sgt. Tyrone J. Adderly and Air Force Sgt. Leroy M. Wright. When the rest of the raiders returned to their bases at Fort Bragg, N.C., and Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, the press was permitted to record the touching reunions with their families. "*We are merchandising*

what essentially remains one big flop," a Washington official conceded.

Murray Marder writes November 29 in the *Washington Post*:

U.S. CLAIMS "NET PLUS" FOR RAID

U.S. strategists are claiming a "net plus" for the commando raid on a North Vietnamese prison camp—a paradoxical score for an admittedly unsuccessful mission.

At least initially, the raid that failed has aroused enough sympathy for its prime objective to offset much of the sting of adverse world reaction to the heavy American bombing of North Vietnam last weekend. This adds up, American officials maintain, to a standoff for the diplomatic-propaganda consequences of the double blow against North Vietnam.

The long-term consequences, however, are less clear. Although U.S. officials have avoided the subject in recent days, they have acknowledged in the past that Nixon administration strategy is following two different tacks: to convince the American public that the United States will not escalate the war in Indochina; to convince Hanoi that it may escalate the war.

In explaining U.S. actions to congressional committees last week, Secretary of State William P. Rogers gave public assurance that the United States is not escalating the war. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird was emphasizing the other side of the strategy—that it might escalate, if North Vietnam provided any provocation.

North Vietnam has chosen to believe what Laird is doing, rather than what Rogers is saying.

Laird's public warning, on Nov. 13, takes the United States will "take appropriate action in response to attacks on our unarmed aircraft" registered much more sharply in North Vietnam than it did in the United States.

North Vietnam immediately treated Laird's remark as public groundwork for an attack. Hanoi's leaders issued public instructions to all forces for greater "vigilance and combat readiness," to meet "new adventurous acts against the North. . . ."

When the blow came, however, they penetrated deeper into North Vietnam than any have since the United States halted its sustained bombing of the North on Nov. 1, 1968. U.S. officials are now convinced that the commando raid at Sontay, just 23 miles from the capital city of Hanoi, caused great embarrassment and chagrin for North Vietnam's air defense strategists.

This is expected to result in tightened security control of U.S. prisoners, plus greater air defense.

The attempted prisoner-release has received considerable sympathy abroad, where Hanoi's past-attempts to handle captured U.S. pilots as "war criminals" backfired on North Vietnam.

But a number of foreign observers, while praising the gallantry of the attempt, questioned its judgment. The Times of London, called the raid "a reminder of the worst failing peace—the failure to keep military and political policy in step . . .

"It would be gratifying," said The Times, "if the shock of the raid were to extract some future concessions from the North Vietnamese over prisoners. Much more probable is a hardening all around at the Paris peace talks and stronger suspicions in Hanoi over what American policy really is in winding down the war."

U.S. officials have noted, with great interest, that Hanoi's commentary on the prisoner camp raid, in a Foreign Ministry statement Friday, was, as they interpreted it, "defense" on the prisoner issue.

Absent from the latest statement were any characterizations of the captured U.S. pilots as "war criminals," "bandits," "pirates" or "aggressors." Instead, Hanoi said: "The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has unswervingly carried out a humanitarian policy vis-a-vis the captured U.S. pilots. It has taken measures to ensure their safety. The U.S. threat to strike and take away pilots in detention camps shows how adventurous and hysteric the U.S. authorities are! . . . The U.S. aggressors must bear full responsibility for their reckless acts."

What the Hanoi statement focused on was not the prisoners, but the bombing of North Vietnam and U.S. attempts "to justify the widening of the zone of attacks" by adding, as the U.S. has done, a new element: air strikes to protect American pilots on missions "to interdict North Vietnamese supplies" moving through Laos.

This shows, Hanoi maintained, that the United States is bent on new "adventurous acts" against North Vietnam, citing Laird's warnings last week that new action may be taken to free American pilots.

Yesterday, both major North Vietnamese daily newspapers, Nhan Dan and Quan Doi Nhan Dan, called for intensification of the nation's defenses "to make a strong bunker of every village, enterprise, farm, worksite, and street, and to turn our villages and mountains into deadly traps to annihilate the U.S. aggressors wherever they show up . . ."

This is further indication, U.S. experts concede, that a "siege mentality," which the latest raids have intensified, is spreading in North Vietnam. Hanoi's attitude, in turn, leaves wide open the question of whether, in the long run, the U.S. attacks will prove to be a "net plus" or a "net minus" for ending the war.

Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden excellently analyzed the effort in their recent syndicated column from the *Los Angeles Times*.

SONTAY: MISSION INCREDIBLE

The scene is a deserted shopping center parking lot, just after dawn. A friendly bald man, looking remarkably like the Secretary of Defense, parks his car and walks up to a parking meter. He deposits a dime, and we see the meter begin to whirl; it is, in fact, a tape recorder. It begins to speak.

"Good morning, Mr. Laird. The man you are looking at (click) is Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America. Mr. Nixon will lose the next election to a radical-liberal unless he can convince the followers of this man (click) George Wallace, that the Nixon administration is hard and tough about Vietnam even though withdrawing from the war.

"This general (click) Vo Nguyen Giap, is keeping hundreds of American airmen prisoner in North Vietnam on the flimsy pretext that they bombed his country. Your job, Mel, should you accept this assignment, is to rescue some of the fliers, convince the followers of Wallace that President Nixon is hard and tough, and take world attention away from the fact that our country doesn't even take prisoners.

"As always, should you or your team fail in this assignment, the assistant secretaries will say it was a success, anyway. This parking meter will self-destruct in five seconds. Good luck, Mel."

It was indeed like Mission Impossible—the technology was perfect, even down to the locks blown off the empty cells—but as so often happens in real life, it failed. The question is, why was it attempted at all?

In the opinion of one of the few Americans who has been involved in making this kind of decision, the effort represented "complete stupidity" if it was more than a political gesture. He assigned three reasons:

First, we are "badly penetrated." That is to say, the *South Vietnamese, at every level of government and the armed forces, are full of Viet Cong agents—30,000, according to the CIA.* It is thus virtually impossible to carry off a raid of this kind without their knowledge.

Second, our own intelligence in and about North Vietnam is "terrible." When Laird told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with heavy scorn, that we have no camera capable of taking pictures through a roof, he spoke more truly than he knew. Our knowledge of North Vietnam is in fact limited to what our cameras see—whenever we get an agent in there he is, in the language of the trade, quickly "rolled up."

Third, it was dangerous folly to think we could go into a real prison without some or all of the prisoners being killed. *Since we were wrong about where the prisoners were, we must obviously have been wrong, too, about where the enemy was and what strength the enemy had.* If there were indeed 200 to 300 U.S. prisoners at the camp, is there any reason to think it would not be defended, probably with machine guns or recoilless rifles?

As it was, one helicopter was lost, crippling the plan. Laird spoke of a "purposeful crash-landing," but this is absurd nonsense. Helicopters, by their very nature, either crash or land, but not both. *Why crash-land, if you can land?* The best theory is that film of the crashed helicopter was due momentarily from North Vietnam's propaganda people, which is the only reason we have heard about the raid at all.

Why, then, was it attempted? There are only two possible explanations. Sen J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) pointed to one, when he said the problem "isn't with the machinery or the technology; it's the brains and judgment that are lacking."

But there is another reason and it is expressed, if fancifully, at the beginning of this column. It is to make Mr. Nixon seem "tough" in Vietnam, thus protecting his right flank as he disengages. It may be smart politics, but it is dangerous business.

Finally, on November 29 the *New York Times* discussed the credibility gap created by the deception which has characterized this operation:

A MATTER OF CREDIBILITY

Secretary of Defense Laird says the Administration decided to publicize the commando raid on an empty prisoner-of-war camp near Hanoi because of "a certain problem of credibility in our society." But nearly everything connected with this brilliantly executed but nonetheless abortive mission—especially the official explanations and claims for it—is likely to widen that home-front credibility gap.

Mr. Laird does violence to credibility, for example, when he persists in asserting that intelligence for the raid was "excellent in all respects." It was excellent in all respects except the one for which the mission was undertaken: there were no American prisoners at Sontay. Even Vice President Agnew said the mission "obviously" was unsuccessful "because of faulty intelligence."

Nor can the well-deserved praise for the brave men who carried it out obscure the probability that the Sontay raid will mean even harsher treatment and stricter surveillance for all American prisoners in Indochina. Even if the raid had been a success, the rescue of 70 or more Americans believed to have been at Sontay would have had to be weighed against the likely consequences for an estimated 300 held in other prisons of North Vietnam.

The credibility problem goes well beyond the Sontay raid, however, to the related issue of the resumption of American bombing of North Vietnam and the over-all policy of Vietnamization and "winding down" the war. Mr. Laird says the decision to disclose the Sontay raid was made "to explain what we did in the North" and to refute North Vietnamese charges of heavy American bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

Hanoi doubtless exaggerated; yet *Assistant Secretary of Defense Daniel Henkin has now admitted that in diversionary*

attacks during the helicopter raid on the prison, American planes bombed and strafed enemy installations in the Sontay area only 23 miles west of Hanoi. Mr. Laird had said nothing about air-to-ground attacks; he had mentioned only that American Navy planes had dropped diversionary flares along the coast.

This was hardly the way to refurbish the Administration's credibility at home or abroad. About all the world is likely to note is that the United States has again carried the air war close to North Vietnam's capital, as Hanoi had charged and as Washington in effect had denied. When coupled with the resumption of extensive American bombing of enemy installations and stockpiles south of the 19th parallel, the Sontay episode is bound to rekindle old doubts about Mr. Nixon's intentions.

Can the President's idea of Vietnamization include a stepped-up employment of American air power against the North to compensate for the withdrawal of ground troops? Can he still entertain the notion that another flexing of American military muscle will make Hanoi and the Vietcong more reasonable in negotiations about both peace and prisoners? These old questions have taken on fresh urgency. In the circumstances it is difficult to credit the assurances of Secretary of State Rogers that neither Sontay nor the resumption of the bombing will affect the Paris peace talks "one way or another."

Mary McGrory writes in the *Washington Star* as follows:

OUR "MORAL VICTORY" AT SON TAY

What could be more appropriate than for a sports-loving president to derive his philosophy of government from a famous sportscaster? Grantland Rice's motto suffices Richard Nixon in matters of foreign policy and personnel:

"He marks—not that you won or lost—but how you played the game."

The raid on Son Tay provides the perfect illustration of how to view failure as success. "One of the best raids that was every made," is how the President described it to the soldiers who were his guests at Thanksgiving dinner.

Among those who noted the perhaps niggling detail that there were no prisoners in the camp was the vice president, who may be acquiring a dangerous reputation for realism in the White House stockade.

He had previously called the election results—since billed as triumphant—"bittersweet." And when he heard about Son Tay, he said, with a number of other Americans, that there had been a "lapse" in intelligence.

Secretary of Defense Laird, who had gone up to Capitol Hill to tell doubting senators that they had missed the whole point of the exercise, explained the vice president's lapse by saying he had been "out of the country."

The secretary's testimony suggested that those in the country who could not perceive the "excellence" of the

intelligence that brought the raiders to an empty camp, failed to admire the valor of the men who made the attempt or to sympathize with the plight of the prisoners, who now know, according to the secretary, that "America does care."

The administration never makes the mistake of assuming decency on the part of the dissidents. During the campaign, those who did not rail about "law and order" were accused of favoring anarchy. Those who question the raid are heartless.

The crass standard of "mission accomplished," which is the world's, is dismissed at the White House. And it applies equally in domestic affairs.

Consider the case of Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel, who got the ax on Thanksgiving eve, not for his performance, it is clear, but for his attitude.

The secretary had been competent by the old way of thinking. He had overcome the suspicion and hostility of the conservationist. By word and deed, he had demonstrated that he cared about the beasts, the birds, the seas and the forests.

But at the White House, he was known only as a letter-writer. Last spring, at the height of the uproar over Cambodia, he took pen in hand to advise the President to listen to America's youth. He let his missive fall into the hands of the press.

Retroactively, it seems a wise precaution. The President hates being told to listen to the young, and when his own appointee, former Pennsylvania Governor William W. Scranton, returned a report on campus unrest, which advocated the Hickel course, the President refused to read it, or at least to say he had.

It is interesting to note that the man who went to measure Hickel for his official coffin was none other than the attorney general, who has made several boners in line of duty.

Last year he dug up two unsalable Southern judges as Supreme Court candidates, and thus engineered two humiliating defeats for the President. Did the President turn on Mitchell? No, indeed. He scooped him up for a boat ride down the Potomac, and together they composed a bitter reproach to the senators for, of all things, "sectionalism."

And in that regard, one might observe that Sen. Roman Hruska, Republican of Nebraska, who sealed G. Harold Carswell's doom by admitting he was "mediocre," was rewarded for ineptitude by being permitted to recommend a new federal judge.

And Daniel P. Moynihan, who was the father of the family assistance plan, was discovered to be President Nixon's selection for ambassador to the United Nations the very day the bill was voted down by the Senate Finance Committee.

The attempt is everything, as we learn from the White House perception of the election returns. Wrote Robert Finch, presidential counselor, in a letter to editors: "The nation can be proud that the President had the courage to

go out against long odds to fight for candidates who supported his policies." Never mind those 11 governorships the Democrats picked up. If you read the Redskins scoreboard right, they're champions, too.

The pity is that having come so far down the road of failure-that-is-really-success, the President does not take the last step which could make further raids on POW camps unnecessary.

Two years ago, Sen. George D. Aiken, Republican of Vermont, proposed that Americans make "a unilateral decision of military victory" and bring the boys home. Pulling the wool over one's eyes has become a reflex at the White House, and since everybody has been conditioned to see the triumph that escapes the first, hasty view, nobody would be surprised to hear the President announce that we had won the war.

And finally the *Washington Post* editorialized under date of November 25 and 29, as follows:

[Nov. 25, 1970]

THE SONTAY MISSION

It was a daring mission, all right, and not enough can be said in appreciation of the courage and the competence of the band of volunteers who plunged into the camp at Sontay in a futile effort to free an undetermined number of American prisoners of war. There can never be enough said, either, about the agony of the POW's and their relatives, for they live in a cruel limbo which touches the sensitivities of decent and responsible people everywhere. The problem rightly torments the Nixon administration, as it tormented the Johnson administration, so that the impulse to try to do something to relieve this agony is understandable. Contrary to a statement by Secretary Laird, the raid at Sontay may not even be the first attempt that failed. It is, however, the first attempt to turn a failure into an attribute, to argue that such a fiasco somehow demonstrates at last that the country cares about its prisoners, and to suggest that there is something unique about this administration's concern.

"Back in March of 1969, shortly after I became secretary of defense, this administration initiated a program of *going public* on the prisoner of war matter," Secretary Laird said in his Monday press conference and yesterday he argued before Congress that the Sontay mission "shows that the people in this country do care about the prisoners of war . . ."

Well, there are several things to be said about this, and the first is, of course, that the Nixon administration, has nothing—and perhaps somewhat less than nothing—to show for its display of concern. "If there had been prisoners in the compound at Sontay they would be free men today," Mr. Laird declares, but there were not even any prisoners in the compound on Nov. 20, by the administration's own acknowledgement, when the President gave his go-ahead for the raid. That being the quality of the intelligence upon which the President was acting, it is difficult to accept with any

confidence the estimates of the administration about any other aspects of the operation. It was, by everyone's agreement, a high risk affair, to the credit of those who carried it out. But you have to ask yourself what sort of concern we are showing for our prisoners when we sweep them up in so chancy a mission, what sort of cure for dying in a prison camp you are offering, when you propose to involve enfeebled POW's in a shootout at close quarters and to pack them into helicopters and fly them out across enemy-occupied territory in the dark of night.

You have to wonder, then, not just what was gained by failure, in terms of a show of concern, *but what would have been gained if the prisoners had been there and had been successfully freed.* Any man freed, it can be argued, is a plus. But a military operation must be measured in terms of risk and while we do not know how many might have been freed at the most, because the administration won't answer that question, we do know that the lot of the great majority that would still be in captivity would hardly be improved. And now of course, we must confront the almost certain prospect that the lot of all our POW's is going, if anything, to deteriorate; some are sick and all are doubtless weak and underfed; six, we are told, have died in recent weeks. The chances of reprisals aside, they will surely be moved around more frequently, *subjected to stricter security*, perhaps treated even more harshly than they have been.

So the administration can make such arguments as it wishes about the odds, and the risks, and the rightness of the chances taken. They will be judged, as they have judged others, on results. *And the result of the Sontay affair does nothing for the prospects of liberating our captured men. It precludes, one would suppose, further rescue attempts.* It can hardly enhance the prospects of a negotiated release, for what this says to Hanoi, less than two months after the President's much-touted offer to bargain for an exchange of prisoners, is that *we have lost all faith in bargaining.*

So what are we to make of it? It is easy to condemn the failure of a risky mission, or even to ask whether success would have justified the risk. For our part, it would not have. But in fairness, it seems to us quite conceivable that the prisoners and their wives, in their dreadful desperation, might well see it otherwise. There is some evidence of this, not only in the support of the attempt which has been voiced already by some prisoners' wives, but in the state of mind of the prisoners as it has been described to government officials by the handful who have been released. It is not easy to put yourself in the place of men of action now cruelly confined to an open-ended imprisonment and to know how they would weigh a risk which other men might find unacceptable.

In any case, the mission failed. And so we are back at square one, or worse, and there is no convincing way for the President or Secretary of Defense to justify their judgment or rationalize the results. By "going public on the prisoner of war

matter'' they have dramatized a terrible dilemma—and left it more than ever unresolved.

[Nov. 29, 1970]

THE PRESIDENT'S WAR POLICY: A QUESTION OF TRUST

Senator Fulbright. Is this an indication of a policy change—reversal of the basic policy and objective of the administration—or is it not? Perhaps I read more into it than ought to be read into it, but coupled with Cambodia and with the resumption of bombing, and now this additional action, does this indicate a change in attitude . . . ?

Senator Dole. One cannot say there is a change in policy because of an effort to rescue American prisoners . . . The Senator from Kansas does not view this as an effort to enlarge the war. The Senator from Kansas does not view the bombing raids, which were directed at military targets, as any efforts to enlarge the war. President Nixon is committed to the Vietnamization program, yes, and hopefully to negotiations.

—Congressional Record, Nov. 23, 1970.

This is what it all comes down to, in the ongoing debate over the question of what the Nixon administration is really doing in Vietnam, and the conclusions you draw depend in very large measures on where and how you begin—with what dark suspicions and how much trust. It isn't that the critics don't agree with the essence of President Nixon's approach as he has stated it so much as that they *don't believe he means what he plainly says*. For its part, the administration appears to be almost wholly insensitive, not to say needlessly defensive, as to why this might be so; it is as if the President and Secretary Laird and Dr. Kissinger and all the rest had been living hermetically sealed from reality these past years, as if they were unaware that senators and the press and the public have in fact been conned and manipulated and misled and lied to, pure and simple, since the beginning days of the increased American involvement in the war.

Partly, to be fair about it, this was in the nature of conducting for the first time a limited war, waged without full mobilization and censorship and all the rest, in an open society. In such a war, things are said and done for show and for temporary effect, as a means of communicating with, and influencing the state of mind of the enemy—acts not primarily intended for domestic consumption, but visible or audible nonetheless and therefore baffling or downright deceptive in their domestic impact. Thus the "graduated" bombing of the North, intended not as an inevitable move toward an open-ended wider war, but as a thumbscrew that would force an early collapse of the enemy's will to fight. Thus, also, the plunge into Cambodia or the latest bombing of the North or even the raid on the POW camp outside Hanoi—all designed in one way or another, not as a return to the thumbscrew but, if we are to put the most logical cast on it, as a way to buy time for an orderly withdrawal

from the war, to give the enemy pause, as it were—something a great power feels all the greater compulsion to do when it is engaged in a strategic retreat.

However, what the senators and the rest of the critics are arguing is that deep down the President still intends to *win* the war, that Vietnamization is a fraud, that the administration isn't telling us the truth. Confronted with word of the Sontay raid, the most Senator Pell can think of to say is "My God," while Senator Fulbright and Senator McGovern and the others probe for sinister shifts in policy. *In a letter on the page opposite, a trio of academics contends that the President's "clearly announced and demonstrated strategy entails not only prolonging but vastly expanding this immoral, illegal and unconstitutional war . . ."* They add: "to fail to resist his policy, is to become an accomplice."

This is not merely hysterical; it is a gross misstatement of fact. The President has stated no such intention of "prolonging" and "vastly expanding" the war and his continual withdrawal of American troops, which is far and away the most important substance of his policy, argues just the opposite: American battle casualties *have been* sharply reduced; the South Vietnamese combat role *has been* greatly expanded and become more effective; these are facts. And before you can brush them aside, you have to believe, among other things, that there remains within this administration's war council a significant element which still thinks that air power alone can win a guerrilla war. And you have also to believe that Mr. Nixon has some reason to want American forces still caught up in a raging conflict in Vietnam on election day 1972. Leaving trust aside, common sense suggests to us that neither is the case.

Our own hunch is that we are on the way out of Vietnam, irreversibly; that events and circumstances will make the military retreat total because it will prove impossible to retain and protect even a "residual" force of 50,000 men or 100,000 men or whatever; that the process, in the nature of things, may unfold even faster than the President suspects; that Mr. Nixon, while not rejecting negotiation, is not eager enough for an agreement to put the name and prestige of the United States on a deal for the soggy settlement, involving some sort of "coalition" with the Communists, which would be the inevitable result of a realistic compromise; and that the essential contradiction between Vietnamization, which means a gradual weakening of our influence on the Saigon government, and negotiation, which would oblige us to exert heavy pressure on the government in Saigon, will increasingly diminish the prospect for a negotiated settlement in any case.

All this does not necessarily promise an end to the war, only to our involvement in it; still less does it promise that "just peace" the President has spoken of so often. And we wish the administration would stop pretending that it does.

For there can be no absolute objectives in a limited war and *the administration cannot expect to be believed when it explains away a massive raid on Communist supply centers in North Vietnam in terms of protecting our "unarmed" aerial reconnaissance, or when it seeks to turn a bold but sharply limited and unsuccessful effort to rescue a relatively few American POW's into a dramatic feat of arms. We come back to the question of trust, and to the fact that it cuts both ways, which is really what Senator Aiken is saying in a speech pleading for bipartisan collaboration on the war, which is excerpted on this page.*

Our course of action is going to remain very much subject to the response and the reaction of the enemy; it is that kind of war. And we are unlikely to find the best way out of it until the suspicions break down, until the risks and the responsibilities are shared in an atmosphere, not of hostility, but of mutual trust in the pursuit of a common cause.

ROBERT L. LEGGETT.

SUMMARY OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 1282 AS AMENDED

Purpose.—To commend the official command, officers and men involved in the military expedition on November 21, 1970, seeking release of U.S. prisoners in North Vietnam and to express the sense of the House of Representatives that the prisoner of war issue should be given first priority on the Peace Talks agenda and that no other negotiations should proceed until there is substantive progress on the issue.

Cost.—There is no cost related to this resolution.

Committee position.—The Committee on Armed Services, a quorum being present, approved the resolution as amended by a vote of 27 to 2.

